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March 25, 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

VIA MESSENGER

William F. Caton
Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

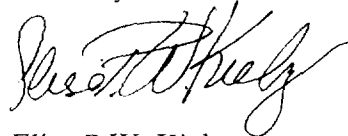
Re: *ET Docket No. 93-7; CS 97-80*
Notice of Ex Parte Communication.

Dear Mr. Caton:

On Tuesday, March 25, 1997, Glenn B. Manishin and the undersigned, representing Echelon Corporation ("Echelon"), met with Suzanne Toller, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Chong, to discuss the May 28, 1995 Joint Petition for Further Reconsideration in ET Docket No. 93-7 and the applicability of the issues raised by the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in CS Docket No. 97-80. The attached document was distributed, along with previously filed comments of record in ET Docket No. 93-7.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's Rules, two copies this letter are enclosed for filing. Please contact me should you have any questions in regard to this matter.

Sincerely,



Elise P.W. Kiely

EPWK:hs

Enclosure

cc: Suzanne Toller, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Chong

CEMA & NCTA Solve Cable Compatibility Dilemma for Consumers

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA, January 15, 1997. Following five years of intense research and discussion, the Cable Consumer Electronics Compatibility Advisory Group (C3AG), a joint volunteer effort of the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association (CEMA) and the National Cable Television Association (NCTA), has developed an elegant, technically feasible and user friendly solution to the problem of maintaining VCR and TV receiver features while retaining cable programming security.

The C3AG reported to the Federal Communications Committee (FCC) last month that it has now defined a set of functions for TVs and VCRs to be labeled "Cable Ready" and an advanced interface to be labeled "Advanced Cable/Media Ready". The cable ready solutions arrived at by the C3AG not only address present systems in an analog environment but also will extend to the digital environment, future cable services and other media transmissions.

The "basic" interface allows a receiver to provide a descrambled picture while supporting record-while-watching, sequential recording, picture-in-picture and other consumer electronics features. The "advanced" interface supports these functions plus remote control pass-through, text over video (for such services as electronic program guides and other media like direct broadcasting system and C-band broadcasting), as well as home theater requirements.

"The 'Cable Ready' and 'Advanced Cable/Media Ready' labels signify that those products so marked will offer consumers seamless interoperability without compromising the features designed into their TVs and VCRs," commented Gary Shapiro, CEMA president. "This remarkable achievement will be enthusiastically welcomed by consumers, retailers and cable operators. Consumers will be able to watch and record a premium or pay-per-view channel, watch one channel while recording another program, and use picture-in-picture functions." An active demonstration of "Cable Ready" video products is planned for the NCTA Cable '97 Show, March 16-19 in New Orleans, LA.

Background

During the past decade, the consumer electronics industry has added numerous features to TVs and VCRs to enhance the viewer's ability to select programming such as picture-in-picture, new remote control functions, favorite channel programming and alternate channel selection. At the same time, the cable television industry has expanded services, offering viewers more programming choices and more user interfaces to facilitate the selection of this programming.

Cable operators typically use scrambling to protect against unauthorized access to premium and PPV channels. Descramblers supplied in set-top boxes by cable operators will, when tuned to a scrambled channel, intercept all the cable signals before they enter the receiver and send only the desired scrambled signal on to the receiver. Because the receiver features require the entire spectrum of authorized channels to be available to the receiver, a basic incompatibility problem evolved between cable systems' methods to ensure the secure

delivery of programming and the view of local stations of
receivers.

This incompatibility is not caused by the enhanced receiver
features or by the expanded cable services but by the lack of
an adequate descrambler interface between the cable service and
the TV and/or VCR. The C3AG has now developed an appropriate
descrambler interface.

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